Who Knows Best? Sharing Care of Infants and Toddlers (Part 2)

Operator: Please stand by. Good day and welcome to the Who Knows Best? Sharing Care of Infants and Toddlers conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I would like to turn this conference over to Amanda Perez. Please go ahead.

Amanda Perez: Thank you so much Jessica, and I am so glad to welcome all of you back to this follow up discussion on our November 19th audio conference on protective urges. Lots of folks registered for this call including program staff. So, we're including here direct service staff, and administrators. We also have trainers and technical assistant providers and Federal staff on the line.

Jessica said it but I just want to repeat that this call is being recorded. And will live eventually on the ECLKC with the tape of the November 19th call there as well. I want to welcome back our faculty Arlae Alston a teacher and program director from Santa Cruz, California. Hey, Arlae!

Arlae Alston: Hi. Glad to be back.

Amanda Perez: Glad to have you. John Hornstein is also here with us. He's a research associate from the Brazleton Touchpoints Center and frequent trainer and consultant with the National Center for Parent Family and Community Engagement. Welcome back, John!

John Hornstein: Thank you. Hello everyone.

Amanda Perez: And finally, we have the director of parenting resources at Zero to Three. Claire, thank you so much for being back with us.

Claire Lerner: I'm happy to do it.

Amanda Perez: So glad to have everyone here to continue our conversation. And I think what we heard last time was that in the work that folks in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Programs do there's so much potential. So, potential both for witnessing through the incredible moments of connection and understanding particularly between parents and children.

But also for times when you see a parent or another adult doing something that you don't feel like is healthy or the best thing for a child. And your relationship with a child those protective urges certainly get raised, right? As faculty shared last time, those urges come from such a positive place. And faculty offered a number of tips for negotiating those feelings.

We also gave you a little activity to look at applying some of those ideas over the past weeks and we

are so curious about how that worked for you guys. Send your comments about that activity or questions to @headstartgov#Sharingcare. Or, in a few moments Jessica will come back to give us instructions on how folks can call in with those questions and comments.

First, though we wanted to respond to few requests that you all sent for additional content from our faculty. So, we have a few questions to begin. And the first one is this is a question we got more than once John. Are there things we should be thinking about differently as were thinking about fathers or men and protective urges? So John what do you think about that?

John Hornstein: Well first of all, during the last call I was thinking about that a lot. I was thinking as we were having the conversation of the implications for working with men. And for me, two issues got raised. First is that typically when we're working with a child we're not working with just one other person. It could be with multiple family members. So it's kind of—and what happens is each of the family members has different ideas about what's best for the child and play out their protective urges not just with us but with each other. So, I think some of it is learning about this network of relationships about a child. And that they're energized by what we call protective urges.

The other piece that came up for me is we're all used to working with women in the care of young children. And that we bring a lot of personal experience in our relationships with the other gender rather that's men talking to men about young children or women talking to the children's fathers. And there's a lot of variation in how men act out their roles with children.

And often and I remember this in my own case. I remember when my daughter was born begin very protective. She was very sick. She was in the neonatal intensive care unit and my job was too simply to stand at the door and make sure that anybody that was coming in was okay. And I don't know how real that was or not but it was something I did. And I'm sure some people saw me as kind of an unpleasant person at that point. But it came from love for my child. So, I think sometimes these - the kind of almost sometimes stereotypical not and sometimes not so stereotypical roles that men play are what we're dealing with and we should understand those.

Amanda Perez: Claire you kind of—as we're discussing this you kind of lead us back to the tips that we shared with folks in the last call right?

Claire Lerner: Right. So actually, you know, listening to John's, you know, John's thoughts on this reminds me that it's so important not to make assumptions. I mean I think that's true in most of the work we do in families. But I think especially with dads.

You know, that in the example that John just gave, you know, you might interpret that behavior like he said in some kind of, you know, negative way. And completely misinterpret what he was trying to do. So, I think it's just a really good reminder that we just have to be really good observers and follow cues and really try and understand the feelings that that person is conveying as best we can.

And so, I think with dad's it's particularly important when you see a behavior rather than jumping to a conclusion about it, you know to ask questions. I love the concept of question asking because it's a great way to prevent ourselves form making assumptions. Is to simply ask, you know, what they're thinking, What they need in that moment and it may lead you in a very different direction then you were going if you were making assumptions about what the behavior means.

Amanda Perez: You know, Arlae you said interestingly you've seen a lot more dad's in your program recently is that right?

Arlae Alston: It's correct. As the economy went bad I noticed a lot of dad's left their jobs. They were staring to be part of the program. And as a teacher, that was a little different for me because as John said I was used to my work being with mom's most of the time. And so that I did have to -- I did have to say that I did went into the assumption of parent dad's -- I found that my check-ins were more about that the things that their children were learning. More about the cognitive, the large motor then the social, emotional. And that's what I usually do with moms. And so I really had to pay attention to that one day and sit down and think about what was my assumption that I was making. Do dads really want to just hear what they're learning or is it my assumption.

It was really helpful to figure out with my co-teachers and ask them to (concern) me and give me feedback on the thing I would be sharing with dad. And also as Claire said that asking them. That's what I did with most, why wouldn't I be doing it with dad.

So, I would ask them what would do you want to hear about your babies day? What is the most important thing that you want to hear? Because it was really easy to go into assumptions for me.

So, I had to be careful and I continue to do that. So I ask them what do you want to hear about your baby. What's important to you?

Amanda Perez: I love that. We had a question come in also about how staff fine time -- we know staff are incredibly busy right. So how do staff find time to go through the sort of delicate process of navigating protective urges with families when staff are so busy? For example keeping an eye on four children during a center based setting, right (inaudible). So, Claire practically how do you get to some of this kind of work with families?

Claire Lerner: Well I think we have to think of connecting and communicating very broadly and look at the many different ways we communicate with parents. So that, you know, we've got to be realistic.
And like the scenario you just described Amanda where, you know, the teacher is corralling kids who are coming and all sorts of different states of emotionality, having separated from their parents or

grandparents.

And it's not possible at that time to make a connection with the parent. And so, I think it's really, you've got to manage our own expectations and think creatively about how to make connections in ways that are possible within your reality. So, you know, supposing a mom comes in and she's super hurried and she's really short with her child and leaves abruptly.

It may be that you can't connect with her in that moment. But maybe later that day you send her an email and you say sorry I didn't get to, you know, welcome you today. It was a really busy morning getting all the kids, you know, settled.

But I just wanted you to know and say something just really nice about their child. And something special they did that morning that you really appreciated. Because it's those kind of things that build relationships.

And so, I think that—or you know, a situation where a parent really wants to talk to you and you simply can't because there are ratios you need to abide by. And it's simply not possible but it can still be extremely powerfully positive to take the ten seconds it takes to turn to that parent and simply say, I know you really want to talk to me. And I understand that it feels really urgent to you right now. I can't take the time at this moment because, you know, I really need to stay with the children.

However, I will be sure to make contact with you at and whatever time is really possible for you. So you obviously have to set limits so you can do your job. But that is showing incredible respect for that parent.

You're noticing their feelings. You're letting them know that you care and that you will find the time to connect with them. And so even those little moments that may literally be a ten second interaction can have a very powerful positive impact on your relationship.

Amanda Perez: And the relationship too and, you know, I think the other thing we talked a little bit about last time was how helpful it can be for parents to sort of see -- for families to see how competent you are at the work you are doing. And so, it gives them another window I think to say oh yes. Look how she is caring for that baby there. John what would you add here?

John Hornstein: Well, I think part of what Claire was saying, I think it was wonderful. Because we can't think about these relationships as one shot deals. Like, oh she walked in, she left. And that's the whole thing. This is an ongoing relationship. You're in partnership with the family in relation to the child. So, it's kind of, I think it's better to kind of step back kind of internally and say well yes that was just one small interaction as part of a bigger history of the relationship. So, that's one way to help with that I think. It's a set of interactions over time. The other thing is I think you can do a lot of

things in a very brief interaction is there's tremendous opportunities.

And in fact, I think that's when the protective urges often get acted out. It's kind of in these very quick moments where somebody is in a rush to get to their work or they have something important to say to you and you're busy with a whole bunch of kids. I think you can very quickly use some of the tools at your disposal. You can very quickly make an observation about the child that you know will grab that parents attention and will put you back on the same wave lengths again. So, I think these moments are precious but if we are stressed and can't be kind of reflective in the process, it makes it harder.

Amanda Perez: Yes. Arlae I know you had lots of strategies for communications with families.

Arlae Alston: You know first I have to say that it's true that even though we're really busy on the floor, that acknowledging their presence is very important. So, even if you just have two seconds, that eye contact, hello, and a smile that really goes a long ways. And with that said, it's that because we're so busy sometimes we can have those big conversations that we would love to have.

And so, one of the things I've done in the past is that I'll have an intake form and it's on a clipboard. And it has the child's name and what you want to share with me about your last evening or the morning. Just little information that will let me know rather evenings or mornings. And also for parents to know that I care what happens when their babies are not with me in the classroom. That I care what they do together. Phone calls are also another big one that I do.

And when there's more private things, I know that I have sent journals home with children. So, I'll buy those little notebooks and I'll write down little observations about what the children did at school. What they're working on. And it'll leave it in the little backpacks or their bags will go home with them. And then parents get a chance to do that as well. I know some families sometimes don't have access to internet or email. So, I find those to be really useful and also to make sure that I know that for me, when I write emails, or I write a note I try to do smiley faces so that it changes the tone. So, because that's also important.

Amanda Perez: Wow. That was something that Claire was talking about too. That in writing things can often be misinterpreted. So it's really helpful sometimes to be cautious about the tone that you use.

Arlae Alston: Yes very important. So, I'll do smiley faces.

Amanda Perez: Yes. We have one more question that we want to address here. But again we really want to get to your questions that have called in today. As we're doing that we would like to invite the operator to give folks instructions for calling in with questions for our faculty. So, Jessica can you come on and just tell us a little bit about how to do that.

Operator: Absolutely. If you would like to ask a question today, please do so by pressing the star key followed by the digit one on your touch-tone telephone. If you're using a speakerphone, please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. A voice prompt on your phone line will indicate when your line is open. Please state your first name before posing your question. Again, that is star one on your touch-tone telephone.

Amanda Perez: Thanks so much, Jessica. Star one. And while we wait for those questions to kind of cue up, how about this question that came in from participants. So, lots of the things that can raise protective urges for staff are more minor. Some may be different as John described a few weeks ago rather than damaging. What happens when staff sees something that really raises a concern? I think we have to recognize that staff do have some responsibilities to report if there's concern about child abuse or neglect. But what can we say about things that aren't quite that far up the spectrum? Claire what would you share here?

Claire Lerner: Well, I think that again that we have to remind ourselves especially in those moments when we're triggered like that. You know, when we see something for example that, you know, isn't going to rise to the level of something you would report like, you know, abuse or neglect. But, you know, let's say a parent is very shaming towards the child. You know, I think a lot of us see that from time to time. You know where a parent might say, "why are you so stupid" or "what's wrong with you?" "And you're just bad." And those kinds of statements that we know as professionals can be very damaging to children. Especially if you know it's consistent over time. But we have to remind our—and this is really the hardest part of the work—is you know managing our own emotions when we get triggered like that, because I think those are the times where our protective urges are really amplified. And I think what we need to learn as good providers is to recognize when we're triggered and take a few deep breaths. In service of the relationship and remember at the end of the day it's not us who are going home with these kids it's their parents.

And if we want to have a positive influence and we need to join that system and connect in a way that makes it most likely -- it maximizes a chance that the parent is going to take in our perspective. So, I think that's sort of the first key step.

And then I think in that kind of situation, you've got to start with empathy. Because if a parent feels judged, you know, you say something like, we don't talk to children like that in our classroom or something like that. Which are things I've heard said before. It's shaming to the parent. And then the parent shuts down and so we've lost any opportunity to have a positive impact. So, it's just strategic really if we want to have a positive influence to not act on our feelings. And to instead take a few deep breaths and connect with the part of the parent that is very frustrated and upset.

And in many cases probably worried because the child's behavior is making them anxious. Because maybe it's a behavior that they are worried isn't going to serve their child well. So, the motivation is positive; it's just that their, you know, strategy isn't so positive. So, I think it's just really important to

go into these situations with that lens and then be able to reach out to the parent and say: “Wow, I know it can be really frustrating when you’re, you know, tired at the end of the day and you’ve just really need to get things together and go home. And, you know, (Susan) she’s just not -- she’s not there yet. And that can be really frustrating. I totally get it. What can we think of together to help move her along?”

And so, you are sort of modeling helping the mother think about other ways to engage her child without having to sort of school her on it—which, you know, it may be a brilliant; you may have a brilliant idea about what the mom should do instead. But I guess I would argue that it is going to be less effective than doing it through empathy and through modeling.

Amanda Perez: And so, Arlae I know you’ve been in these situations, how do you handle them?

Arlae Alston: Just like Claire said it. Just said it beautifully, that those are the times that I know that parents need the most nurturing and caring and understanding. So that even sometimes I’ll put my hand on their shoulder and say wow you’re really upset right now. And that’s really upsetting. She’s doesn’t have her shoes on and you have this doctor’s appointment. I get that what -- this is hard right now. That those are the times I want them to feel that I am their partner. That I am their ally in those moments. Because as Claire said, there the ones that are taking those babies home. So, I want to make sure this parent is feeling loved, is feeling hurt, is feeling okay I’m not alone in this. That I’ll just describe what I see. I’ll talk to them. I’ll be slick. I’ll sort of model a little deep breath with them. And then I’ll say, do you want me to help her with her shoes? How can we do this together so that you can go and make it to this appointment? Because I want you guys to be successful. But when -- and I know as a teacher it’s true.

My protective urges come out when is see those kind of things. Because I’m a human being and I find if that I’m sort of like able to talk to myself. To sort of like does she needs you right now. To look at the helping goals rather than the judgment. But it really helps because I’m here to support them. I’m their ally. And so, that I’ll sort of—and later I’ll use my co-teachers to sort of go, “oh, that was really hard for me to hear. And I’m just glad it went the way it went.” But those are the times that families I find need you the most.

Amanda Perez: Well, and one of the things that John said that I think is really helpful is that in our conversations is that we want to keep families as engaged as possible in those moments. And even if things go to the extreme and there are reports that need to be made, we want to keep them engaged with us. And what a way to do that with them. Jessica do we have any calls or any questions waiting for us?

Operator: It appears that there are no questions at this time. However, I would like to remind everyone that is star one on your touch-tone telephone.

Amanda Perez: So, no worries. Because I have questions. So, here's one that came in from a family child care provider. What she or he said is I heard you talking about the importance of environment and having a place where families can feel really comfortable. But, having a treasure hunt in my home feels like it crosses a boundary for me. So, for folks who may not remember we we're talking about how families feel comfortable in a particular environment, so that they could feel some ownership there.

And feel okay sort of sharing the things they felt and they thought as part of that environment. And one of the strategies that Arlae sometimes uses is a treasure hunt. But that doesn't feel comfortable for this family child care provider. How do I help families feel comfortable in my home? At the same time I still keep my personal space. John I wonder if you have any insight on this one.

John Hornstein: Well I think that—I mean I think it's—what a wonderful question. Because I think the notion of protective urges applies to the places that we live as well as well as to the people we care for. So, you know, the question comes from this real kind of, this idea that environment is part of what we are talking about when we're talking about caring for children. And that each person has a different sense of ownership and sense of permission when they enter an environment.

I remember getting home visiting. And the kind of sense of kind of awe and humility that I experience in going into somebody's home. And not really knowing what was okay and what was not okay. So, I think that really reflecting on this reflecting that it's a place for children but it's also a home, you know, for adults is a good thing to do.

Amanda Perez: Does anybody else have any thoughts about that?

Arlae Alston: One of the technical pieces I can think about is that by providing adult size furniture to make it comfortable for parents to sit down. I know that having family pictures or maybe having the families create a little small family collage. So, there's just things where they see themselves reflected in that classroom so it doesn't take over your home as well. Because those -- I could picture them on the wall with Velcro or just the frame or something the children -- or even little books with the family pictures. So that the family care provider can take those out and put them away, when it's the weekend or it's the evening for her/his home. A culture shelf.

Sometimes, I do that with families that I have invited to bring sort of artifacts that are important and value for their culture and they leave in the classroom. So, pieces that families can see themselves in the classroom, I find - or in the home, I find them to be useful for them to be welcome and inviting. And it's not so takes over your home.

Amanda Perez: Yes. Lots of strategies there. Wonderful. Jessica how we're doing?

Operator: It looks like we do have a question. I would like to remind everyone that is star one on

your touch-tone telephone to ask a question at this time. And we'll go to our question. Caller please go ahead.

Female: Hello.

Operator: Caller your line. And they've disconnected. Again that is star one on your touch-tone telephone. And there are not further questions at this time.

Amanda Perez: Okay. So, how about this one. Are there times when families or staff don't feel protective urges? Claire I wonder if you want to start on this one.

Claire Lerner: Well you know, it's a really good question. And I guess I would imagine that happens. I think that it's important - I guess what to me is most important about this is what does that mean for that person. So if you're a staff member and you're not -- you've been privy to this discussion. And you're aware of protective urges and you are aware that you don't -- that you're not feeling that. I think it's signal to check in about what's your relationship with this child. And you know, what - tune into your feelings about them.

And what are the obstacles to sort of making that empathetic connection with the child. Because I guess to me as a mental health person, that's what the signal would be to me. That I need to find a way to—well first I have to figure out what are the obstacles.

And really be honest with myself. And I think that's a really hard thing. But I also know that the fact is there are some children who for whatever reason because they remind us of people we know, or because of some visceral reaction because they are very like us or they're very different from us. We—there's a negative, you know, a negative dynamic. And your perception of this child is not a positive one. And so those protective urges are not, you know, getting in listed. And I think as professionals again because it is our job to provide sensitive. loving care to young children it's it some ways sort of a wakeup call about what do I need to do to make an empathic connection with this child. What part of this child can I identify with? Because I think that before that happens, it's unlikely that we're going to be providing the kind of quality care we want to provide the children. So, again I think it's just another example or recognizing that we're all human.

And be open to the fact that these feelings may come up and it's again to, you know, sort of emphasize something I think we've all said throughout these calls is that it's not the feelings that are ever the problem. Feelings are feelings. It's what we do with them that can become problematic. And so they can help or they can hurt.

And I think that's where our responsibility lies in this kind of work that's so emotionally charged. Is that we spot - there's a commitment to tuning into your feelings, recognizing when you are triggered, and then to be able to make a conscience decision about how you can move forward in a positive

way. And in this case I think it's being able to make a positive connection to the child.

I think if, you know, if it's the family if you're sensing as a professional that there's really not a positive attachment between the parent and the child, and you're not seeing protective urges, I really would just go back to what I had shared before. And I think Arlae also, you know, amplified which is that, you know, that the—you're going to have the greatest positive impact on those child if you make a positive and empathic connection with the parent. And open them up to sort of the beauty of their child.

Amanda Perez: John I know you and I sort of had a little bit of conversation about this as well.

John Hornstein: Yes. And I think, I mean I like what Claire was saying. First on the staff side, occasionally people in this work get burnt out. And so they can't act on what protective urges they might have because they're stressed.

On the family side I would be very careful on making judgments about whether the, you know, the feelings are there or not. I know I've been—I've seen many people act towards children as if they didn't have those feelings. And then just to discover later on that they weren't showing their emotions the way I might show my emotions.

They might not be as, you know, out front with their emotions. They might be, their temperament might be such that they don't show what would look like protective urges for - to us. So I would be very careful about making the judgment.

I would always assume that there are at least on the part of the family, that there are positive feelings for the child there and protective feelings. And I would work on those assumptions from those assumptions about that family.

Amanda Perez: Well it goes back too...

Claire Lerner: I'm sorry. That's a really, I mean that's -- I'm really glad you said that John. Because I think that piece is very important that we - there's an assumption that the parent does feel it and I want to just clarify that in my comments, if you don't notice those being, you know, expressed in some way it doesn't meant the parent isn't feeling it. John Hornstein: Right.

Amanda Perez: Well it does go back to that piece of sort of the feelings versus again sort of the behaviors and sort of we only see the behaviors. And how do we understand them? And when do we make those assumptions? And how do we clarify them? Arlae would you want to add anything here?

Arlae Alston: Only for the staff that if that's how you're feeling what John said about burnt out. Is it's true. We do get burnt out at times. And so, that going back to your community to your co-teachers to

ask them to watch you. Saying I'm feeling like it's hard. Or whatever you want to say. Could you give me some feedback? Have you noticed? Because it can be exhausting at times but go back to people and come up with a plan to support you. How can I work on this relationship with this child? Because I know it's not about the child, it's about me. So rely on people to support you with that.

Amanda Perez: Jessica have any questions come in?

Operator: There are no questions over the phone lines.

Amanda Perez: Well actually I'm so glad that you just said that Arlae. Because it really feeds nicely into the next question that I have here. Which is sort of around that piece of talking to a colleague or talking to a supervisor. And here it seems to be a colleagues. The person says I feel like when I talk to others about protective urges, it just becomes a gripe session. Do you have any suggestions on how to prevent that from happening? I wonder Arlae if you want to take this one first.

Arlae Alston: Well I think that it's important that they—this person knows that the first step is to acknowledge it. And so I'm glad that they have noticed that. That's good that they have realized that this is what they're doing.

And so, that with my team I know that when we notice that we're doing it, we just name it and say we need to stop. What is happening here? We're just venting with that perspective. And so, really let's go back to looking into the family helping polls. So what's the behavior that we're really seeing? What is the behavior letting us know? So, sort of like an onion poll that things layer by layer. But go with the first. We're venting without any perspective here. And that's not helpful for the family. That's not helpful for the child. That's not helpful for us. And so to really name it and to start from the healthy impulse about the behavior.

What is it that this family is telling us? If it feels like that the team is already through - it has been too long. That we're thinking and we're not coming up with anything useful then that's when I would go into talking to maybe a person - maybe a different teacher from a different center. Maybe your supervisor who is not always on the floor. So, get it out of your classroom to figure out who can support you with this one. But I think that they're already doing it. The first thing is to acknowledge that you're doing it and sometimes it takes a long time. So I think they're already doing it.

Amanda Perez: Claire or John?

John Hornstein: I like what Arlae said about. You know, I mean I think you have to validate these feelings. You know, if someone is bashing a family or work with families that as Claire has reminded us time and again. It's, you know, the feelings are real. So, first I think you validate some of the difficulties of doing this work. And then I have to go to caring for the caregiver. You know, if somebody is feeling that way about the work, they need nurturants as well.

And I think, you know, building is not a onetime deal. I think it's—I had an education coordinator who told me that her goal for the training that we were doing was to have staff stop bashing parents and the teachers in the staff lounge. Like she would go in there and that's all they were doing. And, you know, it's a symptom of something that I think is about all of us. It's about all of us who care for children and families. And it's—we have to care for each other. And then of course it's hard work.

Of course parents do things that we don't like. But if it's kind of this larger kind of attitude towards the work then we have to really think about kind of a longer term process to kind of supporting each other in the work. And understanding it in a reflective way where we can see people's strengths and not just focus on the negative.

Claire Lerner: I think that I would add that it reminds me of what I think I started out with on the last call, which is, you know, again sort of owning our feelings. Which is that a lot of us who go into this work is because we love young children. Not because we love parents.

And—but the fact is that if we want to be effective with and really help young children's lives. It's critical that we make these positive connections with parents. And I say that because in these situations which I definitely have been privy too, with staff being, you know, very frustrated with parents and lots of bad mouthing.

And it is I think a symptom of just their own frustration that parents may be obstacles to their goals for their children. But the fact is that if the goal is to have the positive impact and it's just strategic to find a way to connect with parents. So even though I may believe, which I do, it's the right thing and that, you know, parents are doing the best they can and deserve a lot of support and empathy and any of us that are parents know how true that is.

But the fact is that if we are in this because we want to do well by these children, then it's just a critical step to be able to make that positive connection. So I think the validating is so important. You know, it's sort of a parallel process like we do with parents in terms of validating their own frustrations with their kids is one of the most important first steps to making an alliance with them. That you get it and you know how frustrating it is. And you want to work together to help them. I think it's the same with staff who are frustrated. That they've got - they can't feel ashamed of those feelings.

That those are very normal feelings that come up. And free them. A feeling, you know, a feeling like their, you know, they should feel ashamed of them. But that we need to deal with them because it's part of our job and it's part of what is going to help them be the best caregiver they can be to that child.

Amanda Perez: Nice. Jessica I'm going to ask one more

time. Operator: There are no questions.

Amanda Perez: Okay. Well I think we have about five minutes to go. A little bit more than five minutes to go. So we would need to stop our conversation pretty soon anyway. But I want to give each one of our faculty to say some final words before we close here. And really too highlight sort of one or two important messages that you would really hope that folks walk away from this two phone call experience with. So, I'm going to start with John. John.

John Hornstein: Okay. Well I have two things. Because we have six minutes. So, one of the things is I think one of the—a very profound message here is when you disagree with somebody else. When you have strong feelings about the way somebody is caring for children. Which is why we're in this. And we disagree and we're maybe angry or frustrated.

That is the most important time to stay connected with that other person. I think that gift we give each other as people, as human beings caring for children is to stay connected. Even—especially when things aren't going well. So that's I think that's one thing.

The other thing is that I think all of these protective urges get acted out in bigger systems. Between organizations. Just think of it. Save the Children. Isn't that about protective urges? I mean international work, taking care of children. Well organizations get in conflict with each other. You know, I've often done training where the staff are more angry—they're not angry at kids; they're not angry at parents; they were angry at the agency across the street for not doing what they think is the right thing for children. So, I think these get operated—these get played out at the systems level as well. So, I think we can reflect on those relationships too. And that's it Amanda.

Amanda Perez: I love that John. Because it really helps us think about how we can align those protective urges as we do in those community partnership. How we align those protective urges. As you've said through time and again throughout this time that we have spent together, how we align them for that child. And how we really recognize that we're all working together for the benefit of that particular child. That's beautiful. Claire.

Claire Lerner: I guess one of the things that I have been thinking about a lot and listening. And I've learned a lot just listening to my co-presenters and sort of grappling with these really challenging charged issues. Is that is this concept a repair? Which is that we are human and we are going to act on our feelings. No matter how hard we try to be in tune with them and do all these things we are suggesting as strategies for, you know, dealing with protective urges in positive ways. But the fact is that we are going to act out and we are going to, you know, do or say things sometimes that we regret. You know, once we have a chance to reflect on them. And I think it's well we're not ever going to do those things on purpose. When they do happen. There is also an opportunity for repair and in the repair I think tremendous growth can take place.

So, let's say for example, you now, this mom or grandma or father wants to connect with you in the morning. You can see that they are concerned about something. But you are in a state. You know, things aren't going well. You're assistant's not there. There are kids climbing all over the place. And you're really stressed out about keeping everybody safe -- you're most important job. And so, you're really short with this mom and you express annoyance. Because, you know, in that moment you are feeling annoyed. And then you reflect on it. And, you know, you see the mother walk away dejected or angry. And you later note that was something that you felt you wanted to address. Well in that process so much good can happen.

Because the power to that parent when you even just take the time to write and email, or a text or call them. In whatever way you communicate with the family. And to say you know what. I could see that it was really important that you talk to me in the morning. I'm really sorry. There was a lot going on in the classroom. I was really focused on keeping everybody safe. And I feel like I was really short with you. And I'm sorry for that and I really want to make sure that we take a moment to connect so I can hear what's on your mind. In that moment, the—what you are communicating to that parent is so powerful that you keep—that you hold them in their mind, that they are important to you. You're a model for making course corrections, for reflecting on your own feelings and using them in a positive way. I mean, there is so much positive in that repair. And I think it's just such an important message because it means that you don't always have to be perfect. And we can't be perfect and we can use those—as opportunities to really make these positive connections we're talking about. We need to give ourselves a break.

Amanda Perez: And I think that feeds into Arlae's final message too.

Arlae Alston: Yes. Be kind to yourself. The kind of work that we do takes so much. Emotionally, physically, that we all just have to be kind with ourselves. I do believe that the kind of work we do is the kind of work that changes the world. It's—we are helping to raise our generations. And so that if we're not able to be kind to ourselves how can we be kind to the families? How can we be kind with the children? So that—to take care of yourself. It's okay we're also human. It seems like somehow this society we tend to believe that teachers are perfect. But that's not true. They're humans too. So that just be kind to yourself.

Claire Lerner: Be protective of

yourself... Arlae Alston: Yes.

Claire Lerner: ...no matter where you go right?

Arlae Alston: Absolutely. Because that's the only way you will be able to make connections with the families. To partner with them. To support them in what they're doing. Which is to raise their babies.

Amanda Perez: Well I want to thank the three of you so very much for being a part of this event. It has been really extraordinary to learn from all three of you. And I think you leave us still with a lot to reflect on and consider as folks go about their continued work with the youngest children in their families.

And for those of you that are participating, Arlae said you all should be gentle with yourselves. And Claire said that to some extent too. And we hope that you can hear our gratitude and just the deep respect with which we hold the work that you do.

We ask you to look at some stuff that might not be totally comfortable over the past few weeks. And I just really want to honor your openness to that experience. If you have not done the activities or had the discussion that we suggested in the put it into practice sheet.

It's never too late. If that would be interesting. And if you have any questions, we want to direct you towards the resource list in that original packet we sent. Lots of places there to access some more information.

I also want to let you know about one thing that has come up from the Early Head Start National Resource Center the webcast and the webinars from last year, the virtual birth to three, are up on the ECLKC -- the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. So, if you liked this experience just the audio, I think you will love checking out those events as webinars and webcasts.

But we're also happy to announce that in 2014 Birth to Three will be face-to-face here in Washington DC. And we will keep you posted about dates and venue when they become available. So as we look forward to seeing you there, here in D.C., we want to thank you so much again for being here and all the work that you do. It was great to talk with you. I'm going to turn it over to Jessica to end the call.

Operator: This does conclude our presentation for today. Thank you, for your participation.